

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Human Trafficking

31-10-6.1

Policy

The Department of Children and Families is committed to the identification, rescue and protection of, and providing services for, children who have been identified as victims of human trafficking.

Legal reference: [Conn. Public Act 10-115](#); [Conn. Public Act 11-180](#); [Conn. Public Act 13-166](#).

Cross reference: "[The Intake and Investigative Response to Human Trafficking of Children Practice Guide](#)."

Definitions

The following are definitions of terms that Social Workers may hear when working with victims of human trafficking:

- **coercion** means threats of serious harm to, or physical restraint of, any person; any scheme, plan or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; or the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process;
 - **commercial sex act** means any sex act in which anything of value is given to or received by any person;
 - **commercial sexual exploitation of a child** means the use of any person under the age of 18 for sexual purposes in exchange for cash or in-kind favors; it can occur between a child and a customer, the pimp or trafficker or others who profit from the trade of children for these purposes;
 - **debt bondage** means the circumstances under which a person under control of another person promises to pay money owed with his or her labor;
 - **force** means the use of rape, beatings and confinement to control victims; forceful violence is used especially during the early stages of victimization, known as the "seasoning process," which is used to break victims' resistance to make them easier to control;
 - **fraud** means false offers that induce people into trafficking situations, *e.g.*, women and children may reply to advertisements promising jobs as waitresses, maids and dancers in other countries and then are trafficked for purposes of prostitution once they arrive at their destinations;
 - **harboring** means to receive or hold a person in a place without legal authority;
 - **immigrant child** means a person under the age of 18 who was born outside of the United States;
 - **induced** means to lead or move by persuasion;
 - **peonage** means the circumstances under which someone is held against his or her will to pay off a debt;
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Definitions (continued)

- **recruitment** means the process of enlisting or convincing a person to join with another person for a stated purpose;
- **refugee** means a person outside of his or her country of origin who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion;
- **repatriation** means the act of returning to one's country of origin; in the case of trafficked children, this could also mean reunifying the child with his or her family or caregiver;
- **servitude or slavery** means the condition whereby a person is forced to perform labor or services against his or her will by another person;
- **sex trafficking** means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act;
- **sex trafficking victim** means a victim of sex trafficking [as defined in section 103(10) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000] or a severe form of trafficking in persons [described in section 103(9)(A) of such Act];
- **T Visa** means a visa created by the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to protect persons who are the victims of human trafficking; the T visa allows victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons to remain in the United States on a deferred status and assist federal authorities in the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases (T visas are issued by the U.S. Department of Citizenship and Immigration Services);
- **trafficked** means the state of a person who is or has been a victim of human trafficking; and
- **trafficking in persons or human trafficking** means: 1. sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age, or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, or provision of a person for a commercial sex act; or 2. the obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

DCF shall collaborate with state and local law enforcement, juvenile justice, health care providers, education agencies and organizations with experience in dealing with at-risk youth, to develop and update policies and procedures (including relevant training for Social Workers) for identifying, documenting in agency records, and determining appropriate services for any child over whom DCF has responsibility for placement, care or supervision and who DCF has reasonable cause to believe is, or is at risk of being, a sex trafficking victim (including children for whom DCF has an open case but who have not been removed from the home).

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Careline Responsibilities

For any intake of alleged human trafficking of a child, the Careline shall:

- identify the report as human trafficking and accept it for intake;
 - obtain complete information as to why the reporter suspects human trafficking;
 - immediately notify law enforcement;
 - determine the response priority with the SDM Response Priority Tool;
 - document all maltreatment categories that apply to the situation, in addition to human trafficking (e.g., physical injury, sexual abuse);
 - document "human trafficking" as the maltreatment category when a child is being prostituted by someone or commercially sexually exploited; and
 - when human trafficking is evident at time report is made, generate a Critical Incident report.
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Intake Worker Responsibilities

The Intake Social Worker shall:

- proceed jointly with law enforcement when possible;
- notify an intake Program Manager who shall notify the designated Human Anti-trafficking Response Team (HART) liaison for consultation;
- bring the child to a designated hospital Emergency Department for a medical and psychological assessment, if warranted;
- obtain medical and psychiatric treatment before placement, if warranted;
- consult with DCF legal staff;
- in cases involving non-U.S. citizens' children, consult with the DCF Eligibility Certification Coordinator, within the Office of Multicultural Affairs, to identify a child trafficking specialist or knowledgeable victim advocate; and
- verify with appropriate law enforcement officials that a Silver Alert has been activated or that the Center for Missing and Exploited Children has been notified by the law enforcement agency.

Note: If human trafficking is first discovered during the course of an intake, the Intake Social Worker shall add "human trafficking" to the investigation as a maltreatment category and generate a Critical Incident.

Parent or Caregiver Determination

Human traffickers will often pose as, or may be, the child's parent, relative caregiver or legal custodian.

DCF Social Workers shall not place a child with a purported caregiver until any reasonable doubt about identity or involvement in trafficking is resolved.

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**Law
Enforcement
Human
Trafficking
Victim
Recovery
Operations**

Targeted law enforcement operations for the purpose of recovering child victims of human trafficking are executed regularly in collaboration with DCF. When possible, a law enforcement agency will notify the designated DCF HART or Careline administrator prior to an operation for planning and coordination of resources. DCF shall ensure that designated staff, placements and resources are available to support these operations.

**Unique
Service
Options for
Immigrant
Child Victims
of Human
Trafficking**

The determination of services and placement of an immigrant child who is a victim of trafficking is dependent on many factors that differ from situations in which trafficking is not an issue.

The DCF Eligibility Certification Coordinator, within the Office of Multicultural Affairs, shall make the appropriate contacts with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Anti-Trafficking In Persons Child Protection Specialist to obtain the necessary letters of eligibility and certification for the child.

Legal Reference: [45 CFR §400.116](#).

Repatriation reunification is available for an immigrant child in whose best interest it is to return to his or her country of origin and for whom there is no risk of being re-trafficked.

**Other
Service
Options for
Child Victims
of Human
Trafficking**

Specialized licensed out-of-home care is available for immigrant children and children who are U.S. citizens if they are victims of trafficking. These programs include foster care, group homes and other therapeutic settings. Placement in these programs shall proceed only when the facility or placement agency is informed of the child's status as a victim of human trafficking because these children are considered a high risk for being runaways.

Case Plan

The DCF Child in Placement Case Plan for an unaccompanied refugee minor who is a victim of human trafficking shall include information about:

- family reunification;
- appropriate placement in a setting that meets the best interests and special needs of the child;
- orientation, testing and counseling to facilitate the child's adjustment to American culture;
- preparation for participation in American society with special emphasis upon English language instruction and occupational as well as cultural training as necessary to facilitate the child's social integration and to prepare the child for independent living and economic self-sufficiency; and
- preservation of the child's ethnic and religious heritage.

Legal Reference: [45 C.F.R. § 400.118](#)

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**Confidentiality
of Records**

DCF shall ensure that information about sex trafficking cases and victims is protected in a manner consistent with state and federal confidentiality laws and only disclosed to the appropriate authorities or other third parties as permitted by law.
